to give concerted and special attention to the languishing craft of weaving.

Problems of Opium Growers

4915. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Will the Minister of FIINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems of the opium growers in the country;

(b) whether there has been a sharp fall in opium production in the country in general and Jhaiawar region of Rajasthan in particular;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the main problems being faced by the opium growers; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to solve their problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) Yes, Madam.

(b) During 1990–91, opium production in the country including that in Jhalawar region of Rajasthan had fallen marginally as compared to previous years.

(c) The fall in production of opium was on account of damage caused to poppy crop by mohilla disease and rains, etc. The main problem being faced by the opium growers is that due to crop damage some cultivators fell short of the minimum qualifying yield required for renewal of their licences.

(d) While formulating the policy guidelines relating to grant of licences for poppy cultivation for the year 1991–92, the Government has taken into account the damage caused to the poppy crop during the previous year. The minimum qualifying yield for grant of licence has not been increased but retained at the level of previous year. Further, the cultivators, in whose villages there was widespread/some damage to poppy crop during 1990–91 due to pests and rains, etc. and where such damage was reported and verified by the departmental officers, have been made eligible for grant of licences for 1991–92 even if they had tendered less than the qualifying yield. In addition to these measures and to ensure that cultivators are not delicensed due to marginal shortfalls in the qualifying yield, instructions have been issued to the Narcotics Commissioner of India to condone shortfalls in yield upto 500 grammes per hectare.

Central Assistance to States

4916. SHRI J. CHOKKA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have released the central assistance to any States without getting the conditions laid down for release of grant fulfilled by those States;

(b) if so, the names of those States and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to release grants to other States also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): (a) Normal Central assistance is released to the States for financing their Annual Plans in monthly instalments to be adjusted at the end of the year on the basis of statement of anticipated expenditure on the States, Annual Plans to be furnished by the State Governments. In addition, additional Central assistance is released to the State Governments for externally aided projects on the basis of reimbursements made by external agencies. No

conditions are laid down for release in both the cases.

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

[*Translation*]

Bank Loans to Big Industrial Houses in Maharashtra

4917. SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHARAO GUNDEWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount sanctioned by the Nationalised banks to big industrial houses in Maharashtra during each of the last two years;

(b) whether the sanctioned amount has been released to all the industrial houses;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that the data on loans sanctioned by Nationalised banks to big industrial houses are not complied by them on State level basis.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

Project Estimates for Works on National Highways from Maharashtra

4918. SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATHRAO GUNDEWAR: Will the Minster of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No.102 on July 19,1991 and state:

(a) the details of the project estimates for works on National Highways by the Government of Maharashtra sanctioned by the Union Government during the current year so far; and

(b) the action taken on other projects and schemes proposed by the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b). Out of the 17 estimates for National Highways works referred to in reply to Starred Question No.102, 13 estimates have been sanctioned and the remaining four are under correspondence with the State PWD or other Agencies. Details are given in the Annexure.